1:Nimuendajú E-5 (1941-1942) 1952
SQ20 Tucuna SQ20

Marriage and Family Life

582 According to my Tukuna informants, theoretically a girl may marry as soon after the puberty ceremony as she wishes. However, in practice I have never heard of a girl marrying until the hair had grown anew and had been clipped again, while many remain spinsters for some years afterward, if not for their entire lives. Even today sexual intercourse before the puberty ceremony is unimaginable and, according to some, this held formerly for premarital intercourse as well.

[836]

836 I have reason to suppose that nowadays the jungle and the silent waters of the igapó, over which the small fishing canoes rapidly glide without leaving any betraying evidence, conceal the secrets of many lovers, whose parents suspect nothing. The Tukuna, however, because of the few barriers to marriage apart from incest rules, vigorously resent any deceit on this score, which may result in very serious conflicts. Parents consider secret relations between a man and their daughter a grave offense; they demand an explanation from the imprudent man who did not respect "their home" and advise him that he had better marry the girl. If he refuses, which almost never happens, his only recourse is flight.

[584]

684 Some thirty years ago a certain Marcolino čaitaʼ married the elder of two daughters of one daura'ñkį. After some time he became enamored of his sister-in-law. If he had asked permission to marry her, daura'ñkį probably would have given it, but čaitaʼ abandoned his wife and fled with her sister. Accompanied by his brother, daura'ñkį furiously pursued the pair and overtook them; he slapped them both, bound the girl and threw her into his canoe, and let čaitaʼ go scot free on the beach. As soon as the son-in-law found himself free, he jumped on daura'ñkį, who killed him with a club during the struggle.

[177]

684 Rape never occurs among the Tukuna, who know of this crime only from the Neobrazilians. When I attempted to get some concrete information on this, those whom I approached merely answered: "If she will not—who may take her?" Certain *civilizados* who assumed that such a crime could be committed with impunity against an Indian woman have come off very badly with the Tukuna. A trader called Joaquim Balieiro arrived in his craft, manned by two civilized paddlers, at the place of an Indian on Lake Cajary, where he found at home only a young boy named Izidoro čẽča'kakį and his virgin sister. The trader requested permission to pass the night in the house, which was granted. Later on, the three Neobrazilians conceived the plan of getting the boy drunk so as to be able to take advantage of the girl. They gave him plenty of *cachaça*, but let the cat out of the bag prematurely, before he had become sufficiently drunk. Thus čẽča'kakį understood what was afoot and attacked the three with fury, shooting and killing the trader, while the paddlers barely succeeded in escaping. One of them, whom I knew personally, was gravely wounded. Back among their own kind, they said that čẽča'kakį had assaulted them with intent of robbery.

648

Again, in a certain igarapé there dwelt an Indian who had two young daughters; farther upstream lived two rubber gatherers. Going down to their tent on the bank of the Solimões one day, these two found the Indian there. Seeing that he was lingering, the two hurried back, entered his house, deflowered the two girls, and then left in their canoe for their camp. Shortly after, the Indian returned

2: Nimuendajú E-5 (1941-1942) 1948
SQ20 Tucuna SQ20

881 Several hours after midnight, half a dozen of the girl's relatives, holding her around the waist while her eyes are covered by the feather diadem, [535] dance back and forth toward the wall, which is cut open with a knife so that they finally pass through into the main room. As she is now more exposed to invisible forces, the relatives dance with her until near dawn, then slowly go outside and circle the house. At sunrise they uncover her eyes and have her throw a burning stick against a pole marked to represent the "enemy." She now walks without assistance and dances freely with the others in the house.

[302] Depilation follows. The girl sits on the tapir hide in the middle of the room while three to six women pull out her head hair in little bunches, [534] accompanied by a small drum (tambor) and rattle. She endures the operation calmly, not even drink being given to alleviate the pain. Her paternal uncle in a vigorous speech then instructs her about her future duties as a marriageable girl.

The masks are now surrendered, each owner receiving a piece of roast meat. The disguises are piled around the girl, until only her head protrudes. The cloth is then ripped and the shreds thrown over the house beams. The turury cloths, which now belong to the host, are wound up and put away.

The seclusion room and roast-meat stand are dismantled. The participants divide the pieces, going in a solemn procession to toss them into [482] the river. The girl is carried on the tapir hide held by five or six men over their heads in the procession. She undresses, and, kneeling in [751] shallow water where a magic arrow protects her against water demons, she is washed by all the men who have magical powers. She then redecorates herself and joins the dancers, who perform in the house until the last drop of beverage is drunk. At the end of the feast, everyone [522] bathes hilariously together, tossing each other into the water.

Formerly, in order to bring a large haul of fish, the girl was washed [226] again after the feast with a solution of timbó at an appropriate spot on [789] the creek.

Six to eight months later there is a supplementary but less ceremonial feast to trim the girl's regrown hair.

841 Subsequent menstruations entail few restrictions: a woman stays in her yard because the spirits of certain trees may injure her with an arrow and because contact with her would make a man inefficient in any undertaking.

836 **Marriage and adulthood.**—Sexual intercourse with prepubescent girls is unthinkable; with young women it brings shame on the whole family. There is no instance of ravishment. Rape is a grave offense to the parents.

584 A request for marriage is made to the girl's paternal uncle, but if the girl refuses peremptorily, she cannot be forced to marry. Public notice